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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,

on Friday, 3 May 1991, at 3.00 p.m.

President: Mr. FELIX PAGANON (France)

- Examination of petitions

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

EXAMINATION OF PETITIONS (T/INF/39)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Council will now continue with the examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

As agreed at our meeting this morning, we shall now begin hearing petitioners whose requests for a hearing are contained in documents T/PET.10/752 to 758. The Council will hear today the following petitioners: Mr. Charles A. Scheiner, National Mobilization for Survival; Ms. Lynn Wilson, Otil a Beluad; Ms. Felice D. Gaer, International League for Human Rights; Ibedul Yutaka Gi bons, Paramount Chief of Palau; Mr. Francisco Ngirailemesang, Special Assistant to Paramount Chief Ibedul; Mr. John O. Ngiraked, Acting Reklai of Palau; and Mr. Peter de Krassel, Legal Counsel to the Koror State Government and to Paramount Chief Ibedul.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Scheiner, Ms. Wilson, Ms. Gaer, Paramount Chief Ibedul, Mr. Ngirailemesang, Mr. Ngiraked and Mr. de Krassel took places at the petitioners' table.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on Mr. Charles A. Scheiner of the National Mobilization for Survival, whose request for a hearing appears in document T/PET.10/752.

Mr. SCHEINER: I am speaking today on behalf of the National Mobilization for Survival, an organization of grass-roots peace and justice groups throughout the United States; the War Resisters International, a secular pacifist organization with sections in more than 20 countries; and the international Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific movement. I also publish Belau Update, a newsletter which covers Palau's struggle to define its political future.

(Mr. Scheiner)

Before discussing the situation in Palau, I would like to express our concern with the hasty and capricious action taken by the Security Council in December, when it adopted resolution 683 (1990) terminating the Trusteeship for the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The elected leadership of the Mariana Islands has repeatedly petitioned the Trusteeship Council, raising serious concerns -

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The representative of the United Kingdom wishes to speak on a point of order, and I now call on him.

Mr. HARKIN (United Kingdom): On a point of order, I should like to state that the Trusteeship Council is now seized of only one matter - the Republic of Palau. It is quite improper to raise in this Chamber issues that are no longer under the aegis of the Trusteeship Council. My delegation would hope that the petitioners would concentrate on the issue that is under the aegis of the Trusteeship Council - namely, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, which is the Republic of Palau.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The petitioner may now continue his statement, but I would ask him to be good enough to take into account the observation just made by the United Kingdom representative.

Mr. SCHEINER: I have one more sentence that refers to the Security Council, and then I shall be connecting this with Palau.

When the Security Council acted, it had before it a letter from Marianas Governor Lorenzo De Leon Guerrero urging it to wait until it had heard the concerns of his Government. The Security Council ignored this request, casting the Marianas to the seas of Washington's unsupervised administration.

I implore the Trusteeship Council not to do the same to the people of the Republic of Palau. Since the Council's session last year, a number of developments have cast a shadow over hopes of the Palauan people. Washington has reversed direction, taking self-government away from the Republic. At the same time, a United States State Department official has threatened to cut Palau loose, with an abrupt end to all United States support. A New York Federal Court ruling and a pending case in Washington could have serious effects for the future. And a United States-dominated "new world order", where Washington controls events by the threat and use of excessive, brutal military force, raises new dangers for Palau and for other small countries that wish neither to offend nor to participate in global power games.

(Mr. Scheiner)

Other petitioners will go into more detail on these developments; I merely wish to highlight a few of them from the perspective of United States citizens who are outraged at the way our Government behaves toward people for whom we are trustees. I hope that the Trusteeship Council will exercise its oversight responsibility and examine these problems fully. I would be glad to provide additional documentation.

As the Council knows, United States Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan issued Order No. 3142 last October, redefining Palau's subservience to the United States Government - making clear that any sovereignty exercised by the Government of Palau is by voluntary good will of the United States. The order had been preceded by an even more offensively worded draft, which was revised after extensive and unified pressure from officials in Palau and other Pacific countries.

Even as finalized, however, the Secretary's Order is a step backwards from the trend towards autonomy for Palau, and contains enough ambiguities and contradictions to sow ongoing confusion in the islands. The Interior Department has repeatedly stated that its authority under this Order - not subject to Congressional oversight - transcends Palau's own Constitution and laws. Since the Order includes line-item veto of Palauan legislation, the ability to control Palau's communications with international and foreign agencies, and the potential appointment of Palau Government officials, it is a bold statement of old-fashioned colonial rule and a far cry from the Trusteeship Agreement's mandate to the Administering Authority to "promote development ... toward self-government or independence".

Six weeks after the Secretary's Order 3142 became effective, Assistant Secretary Stella Guerra exercised her powers under the Order and vetoed 55 of

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the 63 sections of Palau's unified national budget for fiscal year 1991. Her 29 November veto blocked every specific appropriation in the law and stipulated that Palau had to spend money only as "earmarked" in a letter her office had sent to Palau a week before. Holding Palau to a higher standard than the United States Government holds itself, the Assistant Secretary demanded a "funds availability analysis".

Palau's President appealed, but the appeal was denied, putting the Republic into turmoil and forcing the furlough of several hundred Government employees. On Christmas Day, Palau passed another budget, which was arbitrarily amended by the Assistant Secretary. She insisted that nearly $1 million be shifted from 12 specific highway-construction and other small projects to support the operations of the IPSECO electric power plant.

The budget eventually allowed by Washington was only slightly different from the one which was blocked, but the signals are clear. Unelected Washington officials, with no accountability and little knowledge of the situation in Palau, will micro-manage operations there, defying the local Government. Having failed to persuade Palau's electorate to approve the Compact of Free Association, Washington now intends to show it just how unpleasant trusteeship can be.

This message was reinforced by a widely leaked telegram from Lloyd W. Moss, the United States State Department liaison officer in Koror. On 27 March Mr. Moss wired 21 United States Pacific and Washington offices urging the United States to

> "set a date for trusteeship termination - and then let the Palauans chart their own course."

(Mr. Scheiner)

Moss pointed out that

> "standards of living in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands are already below the Palauan level, and may decline further when funds flowing from their respective Compacts of Free Association dry up."

He made a strong case that it is not in Palau's interest to approve the Compact, and correctly observed that

> "United States Government efforts to reassert oversight/control are perceived by [Palau's] OEK and Bureau of Foreign Affairs ... as an abridgement of their authority and a 'step backward' on the path to independence or self-government."

Belatedly recognizing that 75 per cent of Palau's voters will never approve a Compact of Free Association that overrides the constitutional ban on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, Moss asserts that

> "the United States would be unlikely to station any forces or build installations in Palau ... The only real United States strategic interest in Palau is that of strategic denial, i.e. ensuring that no other Power establishes military bases here; given public sentiment, the United States should have little trouble concluding arrangements with the Palauan Government, formally or informally, to preclude this unlikely eventuality."

Moss points out that United States and French warships have repeatedly visited Palau in direct violation of the Republic's Constitution, and concludes that

> "indefinite prolongation of the last trusteeship on earth ... appears too high a price for palliation of concerns that a hypothetical independent

(Mr. Scheiner)

Palauan Government might some day deny the visit/transit of a United States ship or aircraft."

Although some in the State Department have denied that the views of Mr. Moss represent official policy, the intimidation, especially on the heels of the budget confrontation, is clear. With such a rapid turnaround, however, many in Palau are afraid they may be abruptly set adrift without the financial basis or the political development to protect themselves from the sort of unscrupulous operators that have plagued the islands in recent years.

The State Department's change of heart may have been partially prompted by a ruling issued by the United States Court of Appeals on 4 February this year. In the IPSECO debt case, the Court overturned an earlier ruling that Palau is a foreign State and remanded the case to New York State Court, thus forestalling, at least for the time being, the efforts by bankers to collect over $50 million from Palau for the defaulted power-plant-construction debt. Last year, a Congressionally brokered settlement of the IPSECO matter was used, albeit unsuccessfully, as a sweetener to pressure Palauans into voting for the Compact of Free Association.

Palauans' refusal to approve that Compact has saved them substantial money, with the Appeals Court observing that

"In point of fact, resolution of the free-association question remains very much on 'hold,' and the dismantling of the 'old trusteeship' is nowhere in sight."

Since Palau is not self-governing, the Federal courts have no jurisdiction. In the Appeals Court's unusually rational view, Palau cannot be held responsible for actions which it had no power to take without United States Government approval.

(Mr. Scheiner)

I would like to use my position as a non-Palauan to violate a Palauan custom - that of never criticizing leaders in front of outsiders. I am aware that many people in Palau, from a wide range of geographic and social positions, are increasingly unhappy with actions taken by Palau's businessmen and politicians. They fear that the lure of foreign investment, and the potential for lucrative land deals and development projects, are forfeiting their future.

Land which has been owned by clans and villages for many generations is being consolidated and sold for the short-term benefit of a few, with no thought for future generations. A centuries-old, harmonious, consensus-based societal structure is being subverted by greed and the imposition of a Western political and economic model which does not fit. Last year, for example, President Etpison was deposed as Chief of his village by the elder women, who exercised their power because they were troubled by his leasing of land to a Japanese corporation without first consulting them. Others are pursuing an Australian-run toxic waste incinerator project which would import poisons from South-East Asia to burn them in Palau's fragile environment.

A recent decision of the Palau Supreme Court invalidating 99-year leases to foreign companies is a slight restraint on irresponsible development, but cannot prevent an anticipated influx of dollars and yen from destroying Palauans' culture, traditional society and, eventually, their lives. The Administering Authority and the Trusteeship Council have an obligation to help preserve Palau's customary political processes, and not to hasten their destruction by placing all power in recently created, and perhaps inappropriate, so-called democratic elected politicians. Perhaps the lawsuit filed this week by traditional leaders against the United States Department of the Interior will help restore some equilibrium to Palauan society.

(Mr. Scheiner)

I would be remiss if I did not mention the serious implications the United States-Iraq war and President Bush's new world order have for Palau and other small countries which the United States might see as militarily useful. We are entering an era where the United States Government, unfortunately sanctioned by many of the United Nations, asserts the right to impose its will by military force anywhere in the world. By killing a thousand Iraqis for every American soldier who died, and by creating ongoing chaos, masses of refugees and environmental devastation, the United States Government has served notice that we are number one in the willingness to use disproportionate, untargeted and immoral violence against any people who happen to live under a leader we find it convenient to oppose.

I can only pray that the people of Palau are never caught in crossfire between the United States and one of its adversaries, as they were 50 years ago. The allied massacre against the people of Iraq must not be repeated, and all members of the United Nations must avoid future complicity in such an operation.

In closing, I would like to thank you for taking the time to listen to me and to the other petitioners this year. I hope that you will continue and increase your oversight of the administration of Palau, especially in the light of recent developments. Palau is a tiny country in the midst of a vast ocean with many currents and dangers; yet its society prospered for centuries before colonization.

I hope the Trusteeship Council will act deliberately to help the Palauan people decide their future: how they can preserve the best parts of their traditional culture while participating in the modern world. It will not be simple, or quick, in a world fraught with militaristic and avaricious

(Mr. Scheiner)

opportunists, but it is certainly worth doing, and many, both here and in Palau, believe it is possible.

The PRESIDENT: (interpretation from French): I now call upon Ms. Weers, who will speak on behalf of Otil a Beluad, whose request for hearing is contained in document T/PET.10/753.

Ms. WEERS: We would like to thank you, Sir, and the other members of the Trusteeship Council, for the opportunity to present this petition today. My name is Meikum Weers; I represent Otil a Beluad, a group of Palauan citizens concerned about the future of Palau. Accompanying me are Seba Cosby, and Anne Simon from the Centre for Constitutional Rights.

We are grateful to the United Nations for its role in ending Palau's colonial status 44 years ago, and to the Trusteeship Council for its continuing concern for our country. We appreciate the democratic system brought to Palau by the Administering Authority. We would like to take this opportunity to express our particular gratitude to Morris Udall, who has recently resigned from the United States House of Representatives, for helping us to believe in the system of democracy. It is our firm commitment to democratic ideals that brings me here today.

Since the last session of the Trusteeship Council, the Security Council has acted to terminate the trusteeship status of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. The trusteeship for Palau remains in place, yet we realize that this trusteeship will not continue for ever. We are as anxious as the Administering Authority to terminate our trusteeship. However, term nation must be on firm ground that provides adequately for Palau's future; it should not occur prematurely without consideration of the problems that hasty termination could create for Palau.

(Ms. Weers)

We know that many people, including some officials of the Administering Authority, believe that the process of agreeing on a future status for Palau has been the opposite of hasty. However, we believe that the actions of the Administering Authority over the past 10 years in presenting the current Compact of Free Association as the only option for our future status has stunted and distorted our perception of our choices. The Compact proposal has been rejected in seven referendums under three different Palau Governments. Each time, it has failed to achieve the 75-per-cent majority mandated by our Constitution, which was overwhelmingly adopted by our citizens.

We believe, as we have learned from the Administering Authority, that adherence to constitutional requirements is one of the most fundamental attributes of a responsible democratic system. We are proud that, despite many obstacles, our country has continued to uphold its constitutional mandate.

We respect the views of the majority of the Palauans who, at various times, have voted for the Compact proposal. However, we also recognize that many people voted for the Compact out of fear, intimidation or ignorance of what the Compact actually provided. We hope that this Council will encourage the Administering Authority to recognize that Palau needs time to heal after the difficult and divisive events of the last 10 years.

(Ms. Weers)

We are concerned that the recent Secretary's Order 3142, which alters the relationship of the Administering Authority to the Palau Government, will not create the opportunity for healing. We still do not fully understand what this Secretary's Order means for Palau, but we do know that it moves away from the self-reliant future that is the goal of the trusteeship system. As written, this Order creates the framework for direct rule from Washington on many issues, despite the existence of Palau's constitutional Government. We would like to bring to the Council's attention several provisions of the Order.

First, the Order allows the United States Assistant Secretary of the Interior to appoint two very important officials of the Palau self-government - the special prosecutor and the public auditor. Although the Order makes some attempts to limit the circumstances in which this power may be exercised, the limitations are vague and weak compared to the importance of the power granted to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

Secondly, several provisions of the Order give the Assistant Secretary of the Interior extensive power over financial transactions of both the national and the state Governments in Palau. We are concerned that the Order provides almost no standards for the Assistant Secretary's use of this vital power, which can readily be abused. This lack of standards is of concern to us not only because it fails to give instruction to the Assistant Secretary but also because it fails to help the Palau Government improve its fiscal management. If there are no standards to aspire to and to compare with the Government's performance, how are Palau's officials going to learn how to evaluate and improve their administration? We do not want our Government to be deprived of the opportunity to manage its own affairs; if help is needed, help should be offered - not control.

(Ms. Weers)

We would also like to express our concern that the Order requires our Government to receive prior approval from the United States Department of State for all communications with United Nations agencies other than this Council, as well as communications with all other international organizations. As Palau seeks to build a strong foundation for its future, the Administering Authority should encourage Palau to make use of the expertise on development and environmental issues found in United Nations agencies and should facilitate Palau's contact with international organizations. Would it not be most honourable for the Administering Authority and the Council to work closely together to ensure Palau's final steps toward self-government by introducing Palauan citizens and their leaders to all United Nations agencies available to assist them with economic and environmental development and social and cultural preservation?

Our immediate concern now in Palau is the drafting of a master national development plan, as directed in the Secretary's Order. We are pleased to note the Order's requirement that no construction may be undertaken on any of the Rock Islands without prior legislative approval in Palau, which is the first formal recognition by the United States Department of the Interior that Palau's environment is very fragile and needs careful and sensitive protection. However, we fear that the Order's lack of standards for the development plan will lead to chaos and environmental damage in Palau. We need well-defined and attainable standards for both environmental protection and economic development. Instead, we see the Secretary's Order giving very detailed attention to financial matters and virtually disregarding our most valuable resource, our environment.

(Ms. Weers)

We understand that we are very dependent on financial aid from the Administering Authority and that this makes us vulnerable to both economic and political pressures. We want to build a healthy and sustainable future that reflects the cultural integrity of Palau and allows us to integrate what we have learned from the past, what we are experiencing now and what we must conserve for the future. In order to accomplish this, we must break away from this dependency, in which the Administering Authority merely pours millions of dollars into the Palauan economy by means of annual grants. This system ignores and neglects our continuing need for the basic infrastructure improvements necessary for an economically independent future, such as a reliable water supply and an adequate road system throughout Babelthuap, the largest island in Palau. We also need attention to our rich ocean resources, which, if made a top priority and properly developed, could be a foundation for our economy. These necessary infrastructure projects should be completed, and the master national development plan should be completed, implemented and functioning well, before the Trusteeship is terminated.

As central as these development issues are, we must note our concern about an important issue raised in a recent cable sent by the United States State Department representative in Palau to United States embassies throughout the Pacific. Virtually buried among a number of ill-informed comments in the cable was the valid point that:

> "The only real United States strategic interest in Palau is that of strategic denial, i.e. ensuring that no other Power establishes military bases here ..."

That is also our goal: the strategic denial of other countries' military power in our country, as well as the prevention of the militarization of Palau by the United States. We fear that military presence - any military

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presence - in our islands would invite foreign aggression, just as the Japanese military presence in our islands before the Second World War led to extremely destructive military actions. We were made victims of a war we did not create. Even today, marine life in areas affected by the Second World War is dead forever.

We hear today of displaced individuals, families, refugees and homeless children around the world because of war and insensitive acts of Governments. We ask for the liberty to create our own path, to chart our own course while we have this choice under the United Nations trusteeship system; that is, under our democratic constitution and international law.

We say this not to defy the Administering Authority but to help ensure a future status of economic independence with mutual benefits. Ths status of commonwealth does not appear to provide that opportunity, since it puts us at risk of becoming a minority in our own country. Nor do we want the status of a Territory, because we do not want to be in servitude to other nations. We do not want our land to become someone else's contingency plan.

We ask the Trusteeship Council, first, not to recommend termination of the Trusteeship Agreement for Palau until Palau is ready at its own pace to seek termination. Secondly, we ask the Council to review Secretary's Order 3142, issued by the Secretary of the Interior of the Administering Authority, in order to ensure that it is consistent with all the obligations of the Administering Authority, including its obligations to foster political institutions and promote development toward self-government or independence.

Thirdly, we further ask the Council to recommend that the Administering Authority should waive or change the requirement in Secretary's Order 3142

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that the United States Department of State must approve all communications from Palau to any agency or organization of the United Nations. We urge the Council and the Administering Authority to pay special attention to communications with those agencies concerned with environmental protection and development planning, so that the expertise not only of the Administering Authority but also of the United Nations will be utilized in the Palau master national development plan.

(Ms. Weers)

Fourthly, we ask the Council to ensure that Palau becomes and remains an active participant in all aspects of the process of attaining real independence and self-sufficiency, including a consideration of developing another status. We believe that the United Nations, and in particular the Trusteeship Council, can and must assist us to find a system that can avoid direct foreign economic, political and military control over our land and our lives.

Lastly, I would like to share with you a thought that, I believe, expresses the feelings among some of my people. The power of choice is a divine gift entrusted to man, not to be coerced or imposed by any other authority. It is an extremely delicate and sacred trust that must be guarded against any form of violation.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The next petitioner is Mr. Roger Clark, Vice-President of the International League for Human Rights, whose request for hearing appears in document T/PET.10/754, and I now invite him to make his statement.

Mr. CLARK: As usual, I appreciate this opportunity to appear before the Trusteeship Council on behalf of the International League for Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

This is the first time in the 15 years that I have been attending meetings of the Council that developments in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are not among the topics of debate. The International League was of course delighted that the question of the propriety of the partial termination of the trusteeship was finally referred to the Security Council. The Security

(Mr. Clark)

Council, as we have argued strenuously here, is the proper place for making such a determination, pursuant to Article 83, paragraph 1, of the Charter. Like Mr. Scheiner, we were, however, distressed that the Security Council saw fit to ignore the request by the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to present its objections to the termination. There are considerable legal and political problems with the arrangement with the Northern Marianas that ought to have been addressed. They have now been allowed to fester.

We are left, then, with the Republic of Palau. The League has several times drawn the Trusteeship Council's attention to what we believe are the shortcomings under international law of the proposed Compact of Free Association. I have no intention of repeating the arguments today, but I would draw the Council's attention to a fine recent article by a young scholar, Jon Hinck, which appeared in volume 78 of the California Law Review, at page 915. It is entitled "The Republic of Palau and the United States: Self-Determination becomes the Price of Free Association". The article discusses the problems with the Palau Compact, both under the law of the Charter and under the law of treaties. It is a very compelling piece.

There are two items I should like to address today, both of which have been mentioned by earlier speakers. One is a press report that the United States has plans afoot to set a firm date for the termination of the trusteeship over Palau. The other is the most recent Secretarial Order concerning the Government of Palau.

A report in the Pacific Daily News of 10 April 1991 quotes a cable from the United States State Department's liaison officer in Koror recommending that the United States should unilaterally set a termination date for the conclusion of the trusteeship. The cable is quoted as stating:

(Mr. Clark)

"As things now stand, the Palauans have insufficient incentive to resolve their ambivalent political status, in which they enjoy many of the benefits of sovereignty while retaining financial support under the world's last trusteeship."

The benefits of sovereignty have been somewhat reduced under the current Secretarial Order, but there is something to be said for what the liaison officer suggests. Indeed, the idea of setting a firm date for termination has an honourable tradition. One is reminded of the 1954 promise of French Prime Minister Pierre Mendes-France to negotiate an end to the first Vietnamese war within a month, a promise that was kept. Then there was the series of resolutions of the General Assembly, beginning with resolution 558 (VI) in 1952, which encouraged the setting of a time-table for self-government or independence for all Trust Territories. Those resolutions also contained provisions, of direct relevance in the present context, requiring the setting of intermediate targets and dates in the fields of economic, social and educational development of the Territories so as to create preconditions for self-government or independence. Perhaps the time has come to set a date for termination, bearing in mind that termination is not for the Administering Authority to do unilaterally, but a matter, ultimately, for the Security Council - although there is no reason why the Trusteeship Council or its members may not make an appropriate recommendation to the Security Council. And, of course, the Palauans themselves must be consulted.

A firm date may focus the mind on what needs to be negotiated or renegotiated, as the case may be. Indeed, the report in the Pacific Daily News seems to suggest that with the strategic realignment that has been going on in the world, the United States may be happy to relinquish its contingency

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plans for the land territory of Palau and even its power to bring nuclear material in and out. The article at least suggests that the only continuing interest of the United States is, as has been quoted before,

"strategic denial, that is, ensuring that no other Power establishes military bases there".

With a substantial part of the military relationship out of the way, there is no reason why all options, including independence, should not be wide open. The League was, of course, heartened by the reference made this morning by the Administering Authority to independence.

Needless to say, in view of our criticisms of the Administering Authority's performance in the past, we did not believe that the Council would encourage the United States simply to walk away without making some generous financial contribution towards the future. Equally, as the President of Palau himself hinted this morning, there is no reason why the United States should ultimately be the only benefactor to a Palau with a new status. Japan can certainly afford to contribute, as can the European Community. Palau would no doubt wish to join the Federated States and the Marshall Islands as a member of the South Pacific Forum, and assistance can be channelled from that direction also. With the support of the regional organization and the United Nations family itself, a dignified and viable solution that ensures the self-determination of Palau can surely be found. A relatively recent example of creativity in this area is the Tuvalu Trust Fund. This is a capital investment fund which assists in providing Tuvalu with the income necessary to provide a substantial degree of stability in the funding of essential services.

One might have thought that by now it would be clear that the tired thinking that led to numerous efforts to gain the requisite majority to adopt

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the Compact is leading nowhere. We would hope that both the Palauans and the United States are looking hard for innovative ways to emerge from the present impasse.

We are sure that others, including the Government of Palau, will have a great deal more to say during this session about the United States Department of the Interior Secretarial Order No. 3142 of 15 October 1990. That document, entitled "Government in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands", has already been mentioned by several speakers, including, of course, the President of Palau this morning. That Order replaces the earlier Order No. 3119.

(Mr. Clark)

What the order amounts to is a taking back of some of the powers previously conferred upon the constitutional Government of Palau in the earlier secretarial order. The Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior, to whom most of the Secretary's powers have been delegated, has a more intrusive role than previously in the process by which Palauan budget requests are made to Congress. All the Palauan governments, state and federal, are subject to much greater control when it comes to borrowing money. The State Department has a potentially more intrusive role in the Palauan Government's communications with other Governments and apparently with international organizations, including organs of the United Nations other than this Council. Palauan legislation seems to be more vulnerable to suspension - a euphemism for disallowance - than was previously the case.

In these circumstances there are two objections of principle to the new secretarial order. One is that it has always been the understanding of this body and of the Special Committee of 24 on decolonization, and indeed in decolonization practice in general, that, absent absolutely exceptional circumstances, power once conferred should not be taken back. In fact - and this is the second objection - this rather fundamental principle is written into article 6 of the Trusteeship Agreement for the Trust Territory. In its relevant part, article 6 reads as follows:

"In discharging its obligations under Article 76 (b) of the Charter, the Administering Authority shall:

"1. Foster the development of such political institutions as are suited to the Trust Territory and shall promote the development of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Trust Territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the

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peoples concerned; and to this end shall give to the inhabitants of the Trust Territory a progressively increasing share in the administrative services in the Territory; shall develop their participation in government; shall give due recognition to the customs of the inhabitants in providing a system of law for the Territory; and shall take other appropriate measures towards these ends".

Far from progressively increasing the share of the Palauans in the administrative services of the Territory, the order places more power than before in the hands of the Department of the Interior, an agency that symbolizes Indian reservations and the sovereignty dispute with the Northern Mariana Islands. Far from developing participation in government, the order subjects both the central and the state governments in Palau to more control from Washington. Yet it is control that seems to be directed more towards shifting decision-making back to Washington than towards encouraging the development of skills on the spot. And why did this take place now, at a time when the Territory is, as the Council was told this morning, relatively stable? Why did the intervention not occur to guarantee security at a time in 1987 following the murder of Bedor Bins, when brave women were risking their lives to establish the illegality of the purported amendment to the Constitution, or much earlier, at the time of the IPSECO scam?

We hope the Council will give careful attention to setting an outside time limit for the trusteeship, accompanied by dignified financial and other arrangements, and insist that the Administering Authority withdraw the present retrograde secretarial order.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call now on Ibedul Yutaka Gibbons, Paramount Chief of Palau, whose request for a hearing appears in document T/PET.10/755.

Ibedul Yutaka GIBBONS: I congratulate the President and Vice-President on their election to their most important posts. I am confident that Ambassador Richardson will assume the responsibility of his high office knowing that there is much to be accomplished to fulfil the United Nations trusteeship obligations to Palau, the last remaining colonial Trust in the world. I bring Ambassador Richardson sincere regards from the traditional leaders, the Council of Chiefs and the people of Palau. We all hope and pray that he will effectively lead the Trusteeship Council to fulfil its obligations to the people of Palau.

With me today are Mr. John O. Ngiraked, acting Reklai, my chief assistant Francisco Ngirailemesang, and Peter de Krassel, my legal counsel. They will assist me in responding to any questions members may have.

First, I should like personally to express my sincere appreciation to the Council for this opportunity to be heard. Without the forum of the United Nations, the voices of small nations such as Palau would never be heard. In the case of Palau, our Administering Authority is the United States of America, an advanced country and a super-Power of almost 300 million people. As can easily be imagined, a country the size of Palau, with approximately 15,000 people, can easily be lost in the political system of the United States. Therefore, for myself and on behalf of all Palauans, I wish to express our deepest gratitude for this forum and for the principles on which it was founded.

I believe that, since its inception, the United Nations has done more for the preservation of world peace and the promotion of human rights and decolonization than any other international institution in the history of mankind. Yet it still allows Palau to be treated as a colony, with untold numbers of human rights violations.

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As members know from my previous appearances, it is my duty and obligation as the traditional paramount leader of the Republic of Palau continuously to maintain a vigil over questions directly affecting the well-being of the people of Palau. In our island tradition, the role of chiefs is to protect and to provide, to reconcile and to unify, to lead and to serve the interests of their people. That traditional role has been very much a part of an ever growing awareness of and need for popular representation and participation. In the course of discharging my duties and responsibilities I am sometimes forced to take stands that are unpopular in the eyes of the Administering Authority. Unfortunately, I am placed in that position today. However, true leaders must be willing to stand up for what is right in spite of the political consequences. As I have repeatedly indicated in my addresses to the United Nations, the traditional leaders of Palau do not believe that the United States has honoured its obligation under the Trusteeship Agreement to promote the economic advancement and self-sufficiency of the inhabitants of Palau. Fortunately, I have a strong ally in my criticism of the Administering Authority.

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The recent report to the Committee on the Budget from the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the United States Congress on the proposed 1992 budget states:

"During the last Administration, the Committee had to strongly criticize the department's Office of Territorial and International Affairs for evading its responsibilities in Palau. So, it was pleased when the current Administration indicated an intent to face up to these responsibilities.

"Now, the Committee must, regretfully, express some disappointment about the way that officials in this Administration are going about handling their responsibilities in Palau.

"The Committee has consistently urged OTIA to provide Palau with the help that it needs to tackle the serious problems it faces. OTIA's approach, by contrast, has been to reimpose federal decision-making in areas where decisions should be made locally.

"Instead of working out differences with Palau's impressive new leaders on how government responsibilities should be met, OTIA has sought to order how they are to be met. Officials have suggested that they have taken this approach because Palau's leaders do not want to meet responsibilities.

"The Committee has found nothing to suggest that this is the case. Further, the record is clear that it was these new leaders who called for OTIA's help when OTIA was trying to evade its responsibilities."

This report means that our struggle is no longer ours alone. It means that all people, including Members of Congress of the Administering Authority,

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should join their efforts now to work for an economically prosperous Palau, for a relationship between the Administering Authority and Palau ruled not by alienation but by solidarity; not by suspicion but by trust; not by misery but by prosperity.

Following the end of the Second World War, the hope for the end of misery came "by the dawn's early light", when the United States began its administration of the islands. But our hopes turned into disillusionment. Our traditions became impaired, and new concepts and ways were imposed upon us. The strategic aspects of the United States military interests began to dominate our destiny. In the political-status negotiations between Palau and the United States, the United States disclosed for Palau plans which included the use of nuclear and other harmful substances. These plans became inseparable from the discussions relating to our long-overdue decolonization.

In August 1990, in an attempt to resume negotiations towards decolonization, the leadership of Palau approached the United States in an attempt to reopen status negotiations. The door was closed in our face. We were told to amend our Constitution and ratify the Compact of Free Association. A recent cable from the State Department confirmed this position. This leaves my people with a very limited choice for their destiny - a continuation of colonialism under the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement or independence without adequate preparation and tools.

We regret the United States objection to our Constitution, and particularly to our nuclear ban. We have made it clear to the United States that Palau is not willing to be subjected to testing and the use of nuclear substances, therefore taking the risk of being completely destroyed like our neighbours at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. We will continue to

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believe that a nuclear-free Palau is consistent with the interest of the United States to promote world peace.

We are a peace-loving people. We have tasted the horrors of war. We now choose not to be placed in a similar position again. We simply say to the United States: "Let us live in peace without becoming a military puppet. Give us our right to self-determination, and do not impose upon us the horrors and terror which may follow from the introduction of nuclear weapons into Palau."

Let me remind the Council that Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations mandates that the Administering Authority shall recognize that the interests of the inhabitants of Palau are paramount, and that in ensuring the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the people the Administering Authority shall always give

"due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned".

These guiding principles have not been followed by the United States.

I believe that the United States of America, the Administering Authority and possibly the most powerful nation in the world, should maintain the highest level of integrity as a trustee and should not allow any appearance of impropriety, in that an effort is being made to subvert the Constitution of the Republic of Palau, an effort which was promoted by the Administering Authority with the intention of ending the Trusteeship.

Progress in the economic development of the Republic has not even come close to the self-sufficiency called for by the Trusteeship Agreement. There are social and health problems which are beyond the ability of our people to deal with under present circumstances.

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As the Council is aware, I filed a class action lawsuit earlier this week, on Monday, 29 April, in the District Court for the District of Columbia, against the Government of the United States. Our decision to take judicial action against the United States does not come lightly. For almost 45 years - an entire generation - my people have looked to the United States as a benevolent big brother, one who would look after our best interests and help us grow into adulthood and independence, unconditionally.

Unfortunately, the record of the United States as administrator of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands does not support this fraternal analogy. Instead of leading Palau along a course of economic and political self-dependence, the United States Government has imposed a welfare State upon the people of Palau. It is a system where mass Government employment is the leading source of employment.

For the people of Palau President Bush's vision of a "new world order" carries a stinging irony: our 15,000 citizens are still waiting for the United States to finish the work of the old world order, as mandated by the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement after the Second World War. Palau has become America's Baltic State.

I now turn to the United States, the Administering Authority, in a spirit of genuine friendship. We have grown together in many respects, combining our different cultures and giving birth to new understanding between a small country and a noble and mighty nation. In this context, I request a new and fresh outlook with regard to self-determination, including independence - unconditional independence.

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Secondly, I would like to request this body to undertake an independent investigation and set a certain date for self-determination, for example, five years from this date. The required infrastructure and tools for economic independence should be agreed upon and funded to ensure economic and political viability. During this same period, the inhabitants of Palau should be educated as to the benefits of unconditional independence so they can intelligently make an independent decision that will ensure true self-determination. This will ensure that termination of the Trusteeship Agreement is made on the basis of the freely expressed wishes of the people of Palau, with due respect being accorded to the traditional laws and duly adopted Constitution.

I also ask this body to have the United Nations Human Rights Committee investigate whether or not my peoples' human rights have been violated under the Trusteeship Agreement. I find it ironic that the Human Rights Committee is investigating possible human rights violations in prosperous Hong Kong after 1997 when it totally ignores the human rights violations going on in Palau, a United Nations trusteeship.

In making these requests, I would like to point out that Article 76 of the Charter of the United Nations requires the Administering Authority:

> "to promote the political, economic, social, and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and ... the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned ...".

In the spirit of self-determination for the people of Palau, the United States has provided the opportunity to the people of Palau to create a form of

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government based on the principles of democracy, liberty and justice. I only wish to request that this body help to ensure that the high and lofty standards set forth in the Charter of the United Nations with respect to the Trust Territories be maintained, particularly with respect to Palau, the smallest and the last of the Trust Territories supervised by the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I now call on Mr. Francisco Ngirailemesang, Special Assistant to Paramount Chief Ibedul, whose request for a hearing appears in document T/PET.10/756.

Mr. NGIRAILEMESANG: I come before you as a product of the United Nations Trusteeship System. I was born a year before the Second World War, at a time when Palau was occupied by the Japanese. The city of Koror was a thriving metropolis which accommodated the needs of 30,000 people. Many referred to it as "little Tokyo". Granted, we did not enjoy our freedom, but we did enjoy an infrastructure far superior to anything we have known since. We had a beautiful tree-lined paved road system with paved sidewalks throughout Koror, we had a water system capable of meeting the needs of the people, and we had an electrical system capable of providing a dependable source of power to the inhabitants. There was a thriving economy, because of a balance of trade between Japan and Micronesia. In fact, between 1924 and 1936, the value of Micronesian exports exceeded the value of imports in each and every year. Palau enjoyed a diversified economy, obtaining revenues from phosphate mining, bauxite mining, pineapple plantations and canning plants, coconut plantations and copra mills, the manufacturing of beverages, perfume and charcoal, commercial fishing and canning, the raising of cattle and Berkshire pigs, trochus and cultured pearls and the production of many local

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handicrafts. Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the United States chose to destroy the infrastructure of Palau - presumably because its military leaders wanted no reminders of the Japanese influence in this isolated area of the world. Thus, at a time when the United States was committing vast sums of money to rebuild Japan and make it once again an independent, self-sufficient Power in the world economy, and at a time when the United States embarked upon one of the most ambitious projects in the history of mankind, the implementation of the Marshall Plan, designed to rebuild completely the devastated remains of Europe - the United States did not merely choose to ignore our area of the world, but chose instead to destroy physically that which had been developed by the Japanese. In pursuit of that policy, the United States, through its military leaders, chose to dynamite, bulldoze and destroy the entire paved road system and 95 per cent of the substantial buildings that existed in Koror.

In contrast, today we have only eight miles of paved roads, all of which were paved only in the past year. We have an insufficient water system, with many of the 8,000 residents of Koror having running water only from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. We have a power system which is unreliable - it being not at all unusual to have power outages of an hour or so several times a day. In place of the substantial reinforced concrete buildings we once knew, we have a new architectural style known as "tin shack construction". Simply put, we do not have an infrastructure which would enable our tiny island nation to become economically self-sufficient.

I ask you whether the United States has met its obligations as trustee and Administering Authority of Palau. I do not ask this question lightly - because I am generally a strong supporter of this world Power. In fact, by my

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own choice, I served in the United States Army for a period of six years. But in my representative capacity as the traditional leader of Palau, I feel compelled to put aside my own feelings towards the United States, and objectively ask whether it has met its obligations.

To answer that question, we must first determine what were and are the obligations of the United States as trustee. The Charter of the United Nations gives us the answer. Chapter XI, Article 73, provides in part:

"Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter ... the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and, to this end:

"a. to ensure ... their political, economic, social, and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses;

...

"d. to promote constructive measures of development, to encourage research, and to co-operate with one another and, when and where appropriate, with specialized international bodies with a view to the practical achievement of the social, economic, and scientific purposes set forth in this Article".

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Turning from the Charter of the United Nations to the actual Trusteeship Agreement for the former Japanese mandated islands, we see under article 4 that the United States was and is to

"apply the objectives of the International Trusteeship System, as set forth in Article 76 of the Charter, to the people of the Trust Territory."

In other words, the United States was charged with the responsibility of promoting the economic advancement of the inhabitants. Article 6 specifically provides in part:

"In discharging its obligations under Article 76 b of the Charter, the Administering Authority shall:

1. Foster the development of such political institutions as are suited to the Trust Territory and shall promote the development of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Trust Territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned; and to this end shall give to the inhabitants of the Trust Territory a progressively increasing share in the administrative services in the Territory; shall develop their participation in government; shall give due recognition to the customs of the inhabitants in providing a system of law for the Territory."

Has the United States responsibly and appropriately discharged its obligation under article 6 (1) of the Trusteeship Agreement? Palau is a nation of 14,000 people with over one half, or approximately 8,000 people, living in its principal city - Koror. Thus, as a nation, we are no larger than many of the small towns of America. Yet we inherited from the Administering Authority - the Trust Territory Government - a governmental

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structure and a bureaucracy, and a governmental mentality which not only are far costlier than our meagre resources will permit, but are inefficient and too complex to meet the needs of our people. What the Trust Territory Government did in allegedly preparing us for independence was to create a welfare State in the name of self-government. For example, our national Public Works Office has two boats which are sometimes operable; yet we have 18 boat drivers on the payroll of the Public Works Division. Our National Land Survey Office has 12 full-time surveyors; yet they sit in the office, drawing their full salary, and do notning, because no funds were budgeted for operating field expenses.

You may ask me "Why should such waste be considered the failure of the United States rather than the failure of your own Government?". The reason it is the failure of the United States is quite simple. At some stage during the past 35 years of this trusteeship the United States concluded that it was far easier, and presumably less expensive, to create a false economy based upon governmental employment of the masses than to develop the infrastructure necessary to support an economy based upon private enterprise. In other words, if you give everyone a governmental job which provides a subsistence standard of living, it is not necessary to face up to the far more difficult task of developing an infrastructure capable of allowing a small island nation to become self-sufficient.

The United States adopted this short-term solution to the problems of Palau. In doing so it, first, created a false sense of economic prosperity and security on the part of Palau's inhabitants. Secondly, it created a governmental welfare State. Thirdly, it failed and neglected to promote the economic advancement and self-sufficiency of the inhabitants. Fourthly, it

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has left Palau, at a time when the Trusteeship Agreement is nearing termination, with an inadequate infrastructure, which is incapable of permitting us to become self-sufficient. Fifthly, it undermines Palau's negotiating leverage in the Compact of Free Association negotiations.

Therefore, I submit to the Council that under the guise of creating democratic institutions to promote "self-government or independence" as required by article 6 (1) of the Trusteeship Agreement, the United States undertook a course of conduct which resulted in an absolute breach of its obligations under article 6 (2) of the Trusteeship Agreement, which provides that the Administering Authority shall:

> "Promote the economic advancement and self-sufficiency of the inhabitants, and to this end shall regulate the use of natural resources; encourage the development of fisheries, agriculture and industries; protect the inhabitants against the loss of their lands and resources; and improve the means of transportation and communication."

After 35 years as Administering Authority, what has the United States done to meet its obligations under article 6 (2)? Has true economic advancement taken place enabling the inhabitants to become self-sufficient, either individually or as a nation? Has the United States responsibly regulated the use of natural resources and encouraged the development of fisheries, agriculture and industries? Has the United States protected the inhabitants against the loss of their land and resources and substantially improved the means of transportation and communication? I suggest to the Council that upon close scrutiny it will find that the United States has utterly failed to meet its obligations and responsibilities as specified in article 6 (2) of the Trusteeship Agreement.

(Mr. Ngirailemesang)

Palau is blessed with the natural resources which, had the United States chosen a different course of action as Administering Authority, would have enabled the United States to meet its obligations under article 6 (2). Mother Nature has been good to Palau. She has provided us with natural beauty in the rock islands, which are unusually breathtaking and which could serve as a natural international tourist attraction. In reality, however, Palau has only one small hotel, with 50 rooms, capable of meeting the needs of international tourists. Why has not the tourist industry been more fully developed? First of all, it takes a developed infrastructure to support it. International tourists will not flock to an area that is served by only one airline three times a week, that does not have a reliable communication system with the outside world, that cannot ensure a consistent source of safe drinking water and that cannot provide a reliable source of energy. Our catch-22 situation is that large amounts of private capital, investors and private enterprise will not flock to a place with our characteristics unless there are assurances that our infrastructure will be developed to offer a chance of a successful, profitable operation.

In recent years we have seen examples of Government and private enterprise mutually recognizing large-scale tourist potential. We have seen the implementation of a plan utilizing Government funds for the development of an infrastructure and private capital for the actual development of tourist facilities. Specifically, I refer the Council to Cancun, Mexico, as a prime example of potential being recognized and exploited by the mutual commitment and co-operation of Government and private enterprise. Not too many years ago Cancun, Mexico, was a sleepy native village. Today, through the mutual efforts of the Mexican Government and private enterprise, it is one of the

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major international tourist attractions of the world. Even world leaders convene meetings in Cancun, Mexico. Why has not the United States as Administering Authority and trustee embarked some time in the past 35 years upon a course of action similar to that of the Mexican Government in Cancun, Mexico? I suggest to the Council that it was far easier and less expensive in the short run to forgo imaginative programmes and simply create a governmental welfare State. Thus, had the Administering Authority committed competent, creative and imaginative people with adequate financial resources and professional expertise, an infrastructure would have been developed which would have enabled Palau to take a giant step towards self-sufficiency by reliance upon an active, well-developed international tourist industry.

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In addition to the natural scenic beauty of Palau, mother nature has blessed us with a rich and abundant marine life capable not only of being a major worldwide tourist attraction for the diver, photographer and sports fisherman but also of supporting a major commercial fishing fleet.

Has the United States done anything to promote and encourage the development of a viable commercial fishing industry? Skipjack and bonito tuna in large-scale commercial quantities are readily available in the waters of Palau; yet Palau has had no aid in developing a modern fishing fleet, no aid in developing the skills necessary to exploit this natural resource. Instead, for meagre sums we license Japanese, Taiwanese and Koreans to fish our waters.

The United States has not even seen fit to offer Palau the potential of enforcing its fishing zone. Thus, where our only revenues from fishing derive from licensing foreigners, we cannot even stop the vast amount of illegal foreign fishing that takes place in the waters of Palau. We do not have adequate aircraft or boats to patrol our waters, apprehend offenders and enforce the law. Does the licensing of foreigners to fish discharge the obligation of the United States to promote economic development, encourage the development of fisheries and protect the inhabitants against the loss of their resources? I suggest to the Council that it does not and that, in fact, there has been an utter and complete failure on the part of the United States with respect to its duties in the fishing area.

I will not speak at length with respect to the agricultural and industrial development of Palua, since none exists. Suffice it to say that, while an agricultural potential exists in Palau, the United States has done virtually nothing to assist in its development. During their occupation of Palau the Japanese at least developed the coconut, pineapple, cattle and pig industries.

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For the past 35 years we have seen no significant development in these areas. Accordingly, Palau is in the economically unhealthy position of importing virtually everything it needs, while it exports virtually nothing. We do not enjoy any sort of responsible balance with respect to foreign trade.

The United States and the Republic of Palau have been negotiating for a Compact of Free Association for 12 years, with the aim of terminating the Trusteeship Agreement soon. In reviewing the over-all history of the United States as Administering Authority of Palau, one must believe that the United States has deliberately and intentionally failed to develop Micronesia and Palau in order to gain negotiating leverage and thus attain its military purposes proposed under the Compact. Under the Compact, the United States now proposes to build an infrastructure for Palau. However, that responsibility without question existed under the Trusteeship Agreement. One must assume that the United States intentions in Palau are only for the self-interest of United States military goals rather than for the paramount interests of the peoples of Palau.

I have attempted to describe to the Council today, in as accurate a manner as possible, the severe problems which face Palau with respect to the future. Time limitations prevent me from completely outlining our case that the United States has breached its duties as trustee and Administering Authority. I may be asked, "What is the point? What has happened in the past is history." The point is that this great international body is committed to principles of international justice.

I do not come before the Council today with a basket in hand, asking it to fill the coffers with monetary aid. I do not come before it today asking that it exert pressure on the United States to increase our annual budget or

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to commit several hundred million dollars to redress their wrongs. I do not come before it today to ask it to chastise the United States for having failed in its sacred trust as Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Instead, I come before the Council today, at a time when Palau is emerging as a sovereign nation, with a simple request that this great body has the power and authority to deliver. I say to the Council not to take my words at face value as to whether the United States has breached its obligations. Proof of that assertion requires much more than can be delivered in an address of this nature. I simply ask that Palau be given an opportunity in an appropriate forum to prove its case that the sacred trust has been breached and neglected. The appropriate forum for such a case is an organ of the United Nations. The appropriate forum is the International Court of Justice at The Hague. I simply ask that this great body make it actually possible for Palau to present its best case to the International Court of Justice.

In a matter as important as the survival and future of an emerging nation, where we firmly believe there has been a wrong on the part of the United States in discharging its sacred trust, this Council should provide a remedy for that wrong. I ask that this Council adopt a resolution and cause the General Assembly to adopt a resolution which would confer jurisdiction on the International Court of Justice to try the case of the Republic of Palau versus the United States of America.

Finally, I ask that Palau be given a realistic opportunity to present our case. A realistic opportunity requires funds with which to prosecute a case of this magnitude. This case will involve proof concerning the actions of the United States, or its lack of action, throughout 35 years of acting as

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Administering Authority. Since Palau will have the burden of proving that a sacred trust existed, that the trust was breached and neglected, that Palau has been severely and irreparably damaged as a result of that breach of trust, and the amount of money that would be an appropriate reparation for having breached their sacred trust, we will need a minimum grant of $2 million realistically to be given an opportunity to have our day in court. Upon obtaining a favourable judgment from the International Court of Justice, Palau would reimburse the funds provided by this body of the United Nations.

In closing, the Council should realize that the Republic of Palau is at its most significant crossroads. For 200 years, our peoples have been under foreign influence or domination, first the Spaniards, followed by the English, the Germans, the Japanese and then the Americans. As a result of foreign influences, our native population declined from 80,000 in 1780 to a mere 4,500 shortly after the Second World War. This decline was caused by diseases and war, not of our choice.

At last we are on the verge of emerging as a free nation. While we have only 14,000 people, we are committed as a nation to maintaining our traditional and cultural values. We ask only that this body give us the opportunity to seek justice among the nations of the world. Given that opportunity, the Republic of Palau will then be able to take its rightful place among the world community of nations to promote international justice and peace for all people.

The speech I just made was a direct, verbatim quote of the speech made by the Paramount Chief, Ibedul Yutaka Gibbons, to this same Trusteeship Council on 19 May 1982 (T/PV.1526, pp. 6-25). Nothing significant has changed in the last nine years.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): There are no more petitioners scheduled to speak today. Since there are no questions, I request the petitioners to withdraw from the petitioners' table.

At our meeting scheduled for Monday, 6 May, in the afternoon, the Council will continue to hear petitioners and ask questions. I remind members that that meeting will be devoted to examining items 4, 5, 6 and 7 of our agenda as it appears in document T/1955.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.